

Máster en Estudios Avanzados de Literatura y Cine en Lengua Inglesa

61655 - Working with film in English

Course 2015 - 2016

Curso: 1, Semestre: 1, Créditos: 7.5

Basic information

Teachers

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Recommendations to attend this course

This module aims to provide students with the necessary critical tools to analyze a selection of films from different theoretical and critical angles. Students should have some previous basic knowledge of the theory and practice of film analysis, such as that provided in the cinema modules taught in the English Studies Degree at the University of Zaragoza or at any other similar institution. Students are expected to watch the films and read the assigned readings before class each week.

Course Schedule and Deadlines

- 1) Introduction and discussion of the theoretical approaches included in the program.
 - 2) Film analysis of the listed films (see course schedule) from the theoretical approaches and critical tools studied in the course sessions.
 - 3) Presentation of a 3,000-word essay. Deadline: as per exam schedule of the Faculty.
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Home

Learning outcomes that define this course

The student, in order to pass the course, will have to show her/his competence in the following skills:

- 1:** Produce a critical analysis of a filmic text and provide logical conclusions in correct standard English
- 2:** Discuss key theoretical concepts that pertain to the study of cinema and the moving image
- 3:** Evaluate different theoretical and methodological approaches in Film Studies
- 4:** Produce an original analysis of a filmic text within the field of Film Studies
- 5:** Relate different theoretical and methodological approaches in Film Studies and test their effectiveness in their own analyses
- 6:** Conduct, in an autonomous way, a research project in English within the Film Studies field
- 7:** Compare and contrast theories and approaches to cinema, drawing upon a range methodological approaches (mise-en-scene analysis, star studies)
- 8:**
 - 8) Compare and contrast the different theories of cinematic authorship (auteur studies).

Compare and contrast the different theories of cinematic authorship (auteur studies)

Introduction

Brief presentation of the course

This module aims to provide students with the necessary critical tools to analyze a selection of films from different theoretical and critical angles. This module, together with the other three in the syllabus belonging to the field of Film Studies ("Cinema, Culture and Society", "English and US Film Genres" and "Issues in Representation"), seeks to provide students with a broad introduction to Film Studies by acquainting them with some of the most relevant theories, approaches and methodologies of film analysis. More specifically, this course explores several theoretical and methodological approaches to filmic texts within the field of Film Studies (mise-en-scene analysis, star studies, authorship).

Competences

General aims of the course

The expected results of the course respond to the following general aims

The objectives set for this course seek to provide students with theoretical knowledge and adequate methodological methods which allow them to carry out a research project within the field of Film Studies in the academic context of English Studies. The specific aims of this subject are the following: to provide the students with basic critical tools to understand and analyze film texts in English, to familiarize the students with the most relevant approaches to film texts in Film Studies, and to test the explanatory power of these approaches through the analysis of a selection of film texts.

The capacity to elaborate and apply original ideas within a research and academic context is also essential to conduct research projects within Film Studies in English. Equally important is the development of specific skills such as the capacity to interrelate concepts from different thematic areas, the capacity to handle complex information, to apply the appropriate theoretical frameworks and methodologies, to express informed critical views and provide pertinent conclusions in clear and proper English, aimed at both specialized and non-specialized audiences, and to know how to elaborate a research project in an autonomous way. All these skills are fundamental for any future researcher.

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Context/Importance of the course for the master degree

In the teaching organization of the Master, "Working with Film in English", is one of the three compulsory subjects the student must undertake in the first semester. Together with the course "Working with Literature in English", it seeks to provide students with specialized knowledge that will allow them to analyze critically film and literary texts, respectively. Together with the course "Research Methods and Academic Communication", it will acquaint students with the appropriate research techniques, as well as oral and written communication skills, necessary to carry out a piece of research within the field of English Studies.

This subject is the compulsory one of the Film Studies itinerary and is therefore linked with the three optional courses related to Film Studies: offered in the first semester, and "English and US Film Genres" and "Issues in Representation", to be taught in the second semester.

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After completing the course, the student will be competent in the following skills:

- 1:** CG1: to identify, analyze critically and synthesize specialized (filmic) texts in English
- 2:** CG2: to analyze critically the social and cultural reality of English-speaking countries through filmic representations
- 3:** CE1: to discuss the most relevant theories in film analysis at an advanced level
- 4:** CE2: to use the acquired critical tools to carry out a formal and narrative analysis of specific filmic texts, at an advanced level
- 5:** CE3: to understand, at an advanced level, how filmic, visual and narrative texts work
- 6:** CE4: to apply the appropriate theoretical frameworks and methodologies when analyzing film texts
- 7:** CE5: to use the tools previously mentioned in CE1 and CE4 to carry out an original critical analysis of specific films
- 8:** CE6: to express a critical view and provide conclusions from the analysis described above in clear and

appropriate English, both in spoken and written communication

Relevance of the skills acquired in the course

The proposed aims of this course are crucial to provide students with a sound theoretical and methodological background that will allow them to conduct original and leading research in English successfully within the English Studies field. Similarly, the specific aims of this course are essential skills that will allow students to carry out a leading piece of research within the field of English Studies and Film Studies (i.e. using critical tools to understand, analyze and interpret film texts in English, applying critical approaches to film texts and developing a critical response to these texts).

The ability to develop and apply original ideas in a professional as well as a research context is a fundamental skill to conduct successful research in the field of English Studies. The same applies to the ability to interrelate knowledge from different subjects, handle complex information, apply the proper methodology and frameworks, express a critical view and provide conclusions in both written essays and oral presentations, in clear and appropriate English, aimed at both specialized and non-specialized audiences, and the ability to conduct work (research) in an autonomous way.

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Evaluation

Assessment tasks

The student will prove that he/she has achieved the expected learning results by means of the following assessment tasks:

1: I. First Official Announcement

- a) Ongoing assessment (if applicable)
- b) Global examination (to be determined in the academic calendar)

Assessment Task 1: Prepare and write brief critical essays on the required readings and films that have been set during the course. Students will be assessed on their capacity to understand theoretical concepts and to apply them to the texts to be analysed, as well as on their correct use of academic English (at a C1 level). These activities are directed towards achieving learning objectives 1, 2, and 3 = 10%.

Deadline for the submission of the brief written essays: as per exams schedule of the Faculty.

Assessment Task 2: Write an essay in English. Students are required to write a 3000 word essay on an aspect related to the contents of the course using correct English (at a C1 level). The topic of the essay will be previously agreed on with the

teacher. This essay is expected to demonstrate that the students have achieved the course's global objectives (1, 2, 3, and 4). The essay will be graded 0-10, and will account for 90% of the student's final mark.

Deadline for the submission of the essay: as per exam schedule of the Faculty.

Assessment criteria

- Definition of key concepts. Initial hypothesis. Use of a theoretical framework and methodology. Use of primary sources. Literature review. Well-argued discourse and relevant conclusions = 40%.
- Independence, originality and critical examination = 10%.
- Information structure and organization of the essay. Text layout. Correct use of English language and style appropriateness = 20%.
- Reasoning capacity to exemplify, illustrate, propose textual evidence and defend the student's own point of view critically = 30%.

II. Second Official Announcement

Assessment Task 1: Prepare and write brief critical essays on the required readings and films that have been set during the course. Students will be assessed on their capacity to understand theoretical concepts and to apply them to the texts to be analysed, as well as on their correct use of academic English (at a C1 level). These activities are directed towards achieving learning objectives 1, 2, and 3 = 10%.

Deadline for the submission of the brief written essays: as per exams schedule of the Faculty.

Assessment Task 2: Write an essay in English. Students are required to write a 3000 word essay on an aspect related to the contents of the course using correct English (at a C1 level). The topic of the essay will be previously agreed on with the teacher. This essay is expected to demonstrate that the students have achieved the course's global objectives (1, 2, 3, and 4). The essay will be graded 0-10, and will account for 90% of the student's final mark.

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Activities and resources

Course methodology

The learning process that has been designed for this course is based on the following activities:

This course has been specifically designed to train researchers in the basics of Film Studies. For this reason, the proposed activities (the critical analysis of films and the comments on, presentation of, and reflections on these analyses from various theoretical perspectives) are aimed at the application of the fundamental principles of the most relevant critical and theoretical approaches to the analysis of various sorts of representative filmic texts in English.

The course is organized in three stages: 1. Learning of the critical approaches and analytical tools; 2. Application of the learnt concepts through the analysis and collective discussion of the selected films in English; and 3. Writing of an individual critical essay, applying the theoretical approaches and methods learnt, as well as the specific tools employed for the development of the selected topic of research.

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Outline of the Programme

The programme offered to the students to help them achieve the learning results includes the following activities :

1:

a) Class activities.

- Seminars (30 hours / 1.2 credits): Theoretical and analytical sessions aimed at introducing the main theoretical and critical approaches in the field of Film Studies.
- Tasks/activities (30 hours / 1.2 credits): Classroom activities which will provide students with models for film analysis. Teachers and students will analyze and discuss a selection of critical and film texts which are included in the syllabus. Different tasks and activities will be proposed:
 - Collective analysis guided by the teacher
 - Group analysis and discussion of a selection of texts which will be later presented to the rest of the class.
 - Individual analysis to questions proposed by the teacher which will be later presented to the rest of the class for further discussion.

Students are expected to watch the films and read the assigned readings before class.

b) Guided activities:

Essay elaboration: 45 hours / 1.8 credits (online and offsite).

c) Autonomous activities:

Study: 82.5 hours / 3.3 credits (online and offsite).

Syllabus

1. Introduction: Film Theory and Analysis

Revision of the basic concepts in the analysis of film narratives. The methodology of academic research in Film Studies. The importance of mise en scène analysis. Ideology and representation.

2. Classical film theory

2a. Ideology and the subject: the Althusser-Lacan paradigm. 2b. The spectator and the screen. 2c. Theories of the gaze. 2d. Beyond the gaze and the change of paradigm.

3. Star texts: The study of the film star

Stars as semiotic and cultural signs. Stars as brands. Star approaches to the analysis of film texts.

4. The author and the text: Film directors and authorship

1950s and 60s auteur theories. The death and rebirth of the author. Authors as texts and as marketing strategies. Postmodern authors.

5. Contemporary U.S. Cinema: Issues and tendencies

Approaches to 21st-century cinema. The post-classical style. Hollywood and Beyond.

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Course planning

Calendar of actual sessions and presentation of works

In a typical ten-week-course, two weeks, i.e. four two-hour sessions, will be allotted to each of the five topics in the programme. Deadline for the submission of the essays: as per exam schedule of the Faculty.

Bibliographic references of the recommended readings